



The New River Improvement Project



A Project of the California Mexico Border Relations Council and the City of Calexico

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

California Department of Toxics and Substance Control

El Centro Field Office

627 Wake Ave.

El Centro, 92243

Thursday, January 27, 2011

2:00 p.m.

- 1) **Welcome and Introductions.** New River Improvement Project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair Ricardo Martinez (California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)), called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. and welcomed all attendees. He provided a special welcome to the committee's guests from Mexico who included: Oscar Galaviz (Comisión Estatal del Agua (CEA)), Ignacio Gomez B. (Secretaría de Infraestructura y Desarrollo Urbano del Estado (SIDUE)), and Victor Rangel (SIDUE). In attendance were the following committee members /designees/alternates: Jose Angel (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board), Roger Vintze (California Department of Toxics and Substance Control), Leon Lesicka (Citizens Congressional Task Force on the New River), Luis Olmedo (Comité Cívico del Valle), Andy Horne (County of Imperial designee), Linsey Dale (Imperial County Farm Bureau), and Steve Charlton (Imperial Irrigation District designee). In attendance by phone were Daniel Garza (California Environmental Protection Agency alternate), Frank Gonzalez (CalTrans), and Rebecca Little Owl (International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) alternate). Committee members unable to attend included Ema Rosa Silva (Calexico Community Representative/ Vecinos de Calexico), Anna Milloy (California Department of Fish and Game, Bermuda Dunes Office), Dr. Marilyn Underwood (California Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Branch), Miguel Figueroa (Calexico New River Committee), Antonio Ortega (Office of Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez, designee) Jonathan Ballard (U.S. General Services Administration), Luis Estrada (City of Calexico), Carlos Maturino (City of Calexico alternate), Lisa Santana (International Boundary and Water Commission), and Eduardo Demesa (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers). Also in attendance were Carlos Angulo (CalEPA), Trevor Taniguchi (CalEPA), Logan Raub (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board – by phone), Bart Christensen (State Water Resources Control Board), Rebecca Terrazas-Baxter (Office of Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez), Jerry Arguelles (City of Calexico) Kevin Wholman (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Ed DeMesa), and facilitators Carl Nettleton and Gabriela Coverdale (Nettleton Strategies).

- 2) **Acceptance of Meeting Notes of December 15, 2010, Meeting.** Upon motion, Horne, Second Lesicka, the notes from the January 13, 2011, meeting were unanimously accepted.
- 3) **TAC Chair Update.** Ricardo Martinez reported that the new administration is committed to the New River Project and that people are talking about the work we are doing in Sacramento. Jose Angel (acting chair in Ricardo's absence) reported that the City of Calexico applied for an extension of the grant to the State Board until August. This is a good thing because it will give the TAC more time to do the work we need to do in the community. A letter of support for the City extension has been provided by the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board. Jose reported that the TAC will have to revisit certain schedules and reprioritize resources to improve reporting to the state. Linda Adams, Secretary for CalEPA, has asked our colleagues from Mexicali and SIDUE to join the Technical Advisory Committee.
- 4) **Update on Mexicali Port of Entry Project.** Victor Rangel from SIDUE provided a comprehensive overview of the Port of Entry project from the Mexicali perspective. Key elements include:
 - a) **Description**
 - i) 16 lanes going into the US, one for buses, three for Sentri, one for emergency and the rest for regular vehicle traffic.
 - ii) The development will address both vehicular traffic flow and pedestrian traffic crossing the border and how vehicular traffic will affect the community.
 - iii) The project area is 10.5 hectares (approximately 26 acres).
 - iv) The project has been able to continue thanks to the state and federal governments and assistance from the U.S.
 - v) There will be 13 lanes crossing from the U.S. 12 for cars one for trucks and buses.
 - vi) Four roads will be integrated into the project. Three from the west side, and one from the east:
 - (1) Colon Pontiente. Five lanes with three going to the crossing and two for local traffic connecting with the main boulevard.
 - (2) Boulevard New River.
 - (a) Will have a lane for Sentri pass.
 - (b) Three lanes for crossing into Mexico and one going against traffic for emergency vehicles.
 - (3) Colon Oriente.
 - (a) This road has three lanes which will go into the crossing, but there will be a bridge for the train to cross above. The road will go under. And another portion will go into the parking lot.
 - (4) Boulevard San Mateos.
 - vii) A new access for pedestrians crossing the border.
 - viii) A roundabout for public transportation.

- ix) A ramp from the public transportation center to the U.S. crossing. There are bridges for traffic going above it and a road below.
- x) Bridges for the traffic coming into Mexico for the New River Road and the Senti passes.
- xi) They are already working on Colon Poniente.
- xii) The existing Reforma bridge will be removed and rebuilt to standards required by this new project.
- xiii) They are working closely with U.S. counterparts and have an area where people being deported will be handled.
- xiv) Administrative offices for Mexican Customs will be on the southwest side.
Parking for workers will be adjacent to those buildings.
- xv) Will complete the encasement of the final length of the New River to the border, a total of 422 meters.
- xvi) They have been asked to reconfigure the encasement to include screens inside to collect trash and they are trying to design a screen inside. One-inch spacing, self-cleaning screens.
 - (1) The committee wanted to know the size of the screens and what kind of solids they will intercept. They are 26 meters wide.
 - (2) Jose – wants to make the screen a binational project. He will be talking to the NadBank because it would save a lot of money on the U.S. side of the border.
 - (3) It is a concrete project that will help with remediation for the New River.
 - (4) The screens are not funded but it is up to the U.S. to figure out how to make that project possible.
- xvii) No toxic materials (trucks) will be going across the border to the U.S.

b) Status

- i) All permissions and paperwork have been done and they are ready to break ground.
 - ii) Estimate cost: \$368 million pesos (about \$38 million (US)).
 - iii) Construction will be completed by the end of 2013 or beginning of 2014
 - iv) They don't anticipate any problems.
- 5) **Mapping Update.** This item was covered during the discussion of the public meeting presentation boards.
- 6) **Progress Reports from Workgroups.** This item was covered during the discussion of the public meeting presentation boards.
- 7) **Preparation for February Public Meeting.** A focused discussion on the proposed February public meeting resulted in the following:
- (1) Approve Work Plan. Upon motion Dale, and second Charlton, the Work Plan was approved.
 - (2) Approve Meeting Announcement Materials. Upon motion Baxter, and second

- Olmedo, all meeting announcement materials were approved
- (3) Show mockup/concept of presentation boards.
- (a) **Map of the New River.** The TAC suggested the following photos be embedded in the map:
- (i) Brawley or Imperial wetlands
 - (ii) A photo of the City of Calexico looking from the south to the north where the river crosses the border
 - (iii) Salton Sea at the New River Delta
 - (iv) The International Boundary
 - (v) The wide basin where the Keystone Road crosses the New River
 - (vi) Irrigated field
- (b) **Impairments Board**
- (i) Remove the numbers and make bullets
 - (ii) Replace the drain photo with a different type
 - (iii) Keep the monitoring photo
 - (iv) Keep the border photo
- (c) **Remediation Board**
- (i) Remove the numbers from the map and make the list bullets instead of numbers
 - (ii) Include work that has been done but use captions to indicate that much more work needs to be done
 - (iii) Add photo of Mexicali wastewater treatment plant
 - (iv) Add photo of rip rap below Seeley (mechanical aeration)
 - (v) Add agricultural BMP – tailwater box
 - (vi) Wetlands
 - (vii) A photo of a particular area in Calexico, let Miguel decide which photo he would like to display
- (d) **Visioning Board**
- (i) Remove the numbers and make bullets
 - (ii) Keep the wetlands photo
 - (iii) Keep the golf course photo
 - (iv) Add people fishing in the wetlands
 - (v) Add school kids near the wetlands with ducks
- (e) **Funding and Background Board**
- (i) Basically okay as is
- (f) **Organizational Chart Board**
- (i) Minor changes to titles
- (4) Refine presentation board concepts (included in #3 above).
- (5) New River Improvement Project web site update.
- (a) The New River Improvement Project web site is now live at www.calepa.ca.gov/border.newriver
- (6) Other.

- (a) Ricardo Martinez' office phone will be used as the contact phone for the public
 - (b) The Imperial County Fair starts the week following the public meeting and it was suggested that one of the booths would be appropriate as a place to display the boards. The USFWS booth is the best choice according to the TAC members, and the contact is Chris Schoneman, Project Leader for the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Alternate choices would be the IID booth or the Farm Bureau booth.
 - (c) Make sure there is a handout for the public meetings and the fair.
 - (d) Instead of a return envelope, print envelopes and put a stamp on the envelope for members of the public to return the comment card to the TAC.
 - (e) Time was not available to discuss the Remediation Work Group Work Plan, but it will be made available to the TAC for comments and approval at the next meeting.
- 8) Next Steps. The next steps include the following:
- a) Continue the Remediation Work Group efforts at an accelerated pace.
 - b) Implement plans for the February public meeting.
 - c) Contact USFWS representative to learn if boards can be displayed in that booth during the fair
 - d) Finalize and disseminate media documents
 - e) The next meeting of the TAC will be held on February 10, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. at the DTSC headquarters.
- 9) **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40 p.m.